

Message Text

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ACTION AID-20

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R 121035Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3324

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0274

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF AO

SUBJECT: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO RETURNING ANGOLAN REFUGEES

1. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (FNLA), GRACA TAVARES ON MARCH 10, HE TALKED ABOUT THE NEED FOR FOOD FOR THE REFUGEES IN ZAIRE THAT HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO RETURN TO NORTHERN ANGOLA. HE SAID THAT THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT HAD JUST CABLED THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM IN ROME TO ASK ABOUT THE AVAILABILITY OF WHEAT AND CORN FLOUR, SUGAR, COOKING OIL, RICESAND BEANS. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW MANY TONS HAD BEEN REQUESTED, BUT THOUGHT BETWEEN FIVE AND TWENTY TONS FOR EACH ITEM.

2. TAVARES SAID FNLA EXPECTS THAT ABOUT 650,000 REFUGEES WILL COME BACK TO ANGOLA AND THAT 100,000 HAVE ALREADY RETURNED. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION LATER TAVARES' CHEFE DE GABINETE TOLD ME THE 100,000 FIGURE INCLUDED MANY PEOPLE WHO HAD COME OUT OF THE ANGOLAN BUSH WHERE THEY HAD BEEN LIVING FOR SEVERAL YEARS. IN ANY EVENT, THEY ARE ALMOST ALL IN NEED AND THEIR WELFARE IS AN URGENT FNLA PRIORITY.

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3. THE SECRETARY WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS FOOD AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, WITHIN SIXTY DAYS.

4. WHILE I DID NOT MENTION IT TO HIM, IT SEEMS TO ME WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY THROUGH US GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE OVERT ASSISTANCE THAT WILL DIRECTLY BENEFIT THE FNLA AND I RECOMMEND THAT WE SUPPLY AS MANY OF THESE COMMODITIES AS MAY BE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE II. THIS WOULD BE A LEGITIMATE USE OF TITLE II, AS THE RETURNING REFUGEE PROGRAM HAS THE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE OTHER TWO LIBERATION GROUPS, MPLA AND UNITA. SOME CRITICS WILL CHARGE THAT ONE OF OUR PRINCIPAL AIMS IS TO HELP FNLA BUT AS THE ASSISTANCE IS OVERT AND FOR HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES, THERE IS VERY LITTLE MILEAGE IN THIS I UE FOR ANTI U.S. ELEMENTS. AS FOR THE MECHANICS, CARITAS OPERATES IN ANGOLA AND CAN BE USED AS A DISTRIBUTION AGENCY. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN ANGOLA WHICH COULD ASSIST. THE BAPTIST, IN PARTICULAR, WERE ACTIVE IN THE NORTH UNTIL THE EARLY SIXTIES, AND ARE NOW COMING BACK IN. TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING WILL BE A PROBLEM, BUT I AM REASONABLY CERTAIN WE CAN GET GOVERNMENT COOPERATION.

5. IN VIEW OF THE SIXTY DAY LIMIT EXPRESSED BY TAVARES I WONDER WHETHER COMMODITIES ALREADY ENROUTE TO ANOTHER AFRICAN COUNTRY COULD BE DIVERTED.
KILLORAN

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